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Message Text

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17
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 038819
O R 030640Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4661
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 4675

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, SREF, VS
SUBJ: UNHCR EVACUATION FLIGHTS FROM SVN

REF: STATE 156797

1. THE U.S. CITIZEN WHO CAME OUT OF SAIGON ON JUNE 30 UNHCR FLIGHT (TO VIENTIANE, NOT RPT NOT TO BANGKOK AS STATED REFTEL) IS DAN RODILL, SAIGON STRINGER FOR NEWSDAY AND SINCE APRIL 30 FOR VARIOUS OTHER NEWS ORGANIZATIONS.

2. RODILL SAID HE WAS IN FACT EXPELLED FROM SVN AS SOME OTHER CORRESPONDENTS (E.G., FRANJOLA OF AP) HAVE BEEN, ALTHOUGH PRG AUTHORITIES HAVE ATTEMPTED OR WILL ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY HIS DEPARTURE AS VOLUNTARY. RODILL SAYS HE ARRIVED AT TAN SON NHUT WITH EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF OWN NOTES AND MANUSCRIPTS PLUS MUCH TELEVISION AND STILL FILM HE WAS "PIGEONING" FOR CBS, NHK, ETC. AT LAST MINUTE PRG SAID HE COULD TAKE NONE OF THESE MATERIALS UNTIL THEY HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY EXAMINED, A PROCESS THAT WOULD TAKE THREE DAYS. IT SEEMS FOR A WHILE THAT RODILL WOULD BE ALLOWED TO STAY THE THREE DAYS IN SAIGON, BUT
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FINALLY--HE SAYS--MATERIALS WERE FORCIBLY CONFIS-

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CATED AND HE WAS DRAGGED ABOARD AIRCRAFT.

3. RODILL SAID HE HAD SENT A LETTER BACK TO
SAIGON ON NEXT UNHCR FLIGHT TO "PRG FOREIGN MINISTRY" OFFICIAL
WHO HAD BEEN DECENT TO CORRESPONDENTS, ASKING THAT AT LEAST
HIS OWN NOTES AND MANUSCRIPTS BE FORWARDED TO HIM HERE.
HE PLANNED TO WAIT IN VIENTIANE
FOR REPLY, ALTHOUGH WE URGED HIM (AS WE WOULD ANY OTHER
AMCIT) TO LEAVE LAOS SOONEST AND SAID WE OR UNHCR COULD
PROBABLY FORWARD TO HIM IN BANGKOK ANYTHING RECEIVED
FROM SAIGON.

4. AFTER FIRST HURRIED MEETING WE HAVE TRIED TO RECON-
TACT RODILL TO DEBRIEF HIM ON OTHER AMCITS STILL
THERE. WE BELIEVE HE IS STILL IN TOWN BUT SO FAR HAVE
NOT GOTTEN HOLD OF HIM AGAIN. IF HE MOVES ON TO BANGKOK,
ASSUME DEBRIEFING COULD JUST AS WELL BE ACCOMPLISHED
THERE. (OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT RODILL HAD
LITTLE TO ADD TO PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED REPORTS --E.G.,
DAWSON UPI ARTICLE OF EARLY JUNE.)

5. REGRET DELAY IN FURNISHING THIS INFO ON RODILL.
HOWEVER, HAD INTENDED TO ELABORATE AFTER RECONTACTING
HIM OR, FAILING THAT, TO FOLD FOREGOING INTO LONGER
MESSAGE STILL IN PREPARATION ON CONVERSATION WITH
ALEXANDRE CASSELLA OF UNHCR ON WHOLE QUESTION OF
FLIGHTS AND PASSENGERS. WILL FILE THAT MESSAGE LATER
IN DAY.

6. WE DO NOT YET HAVE GOOD FEEL FOR HOW FOREIGNERS ARE
BEING "SELECTED" OTHER THAN REPORT THROUGH CASSELLA
THAT SOME 500 FRENCH NATIONALS HAVE OBTAINED EXIT
PERMITS AND FIRST OF THESE PRESUMABLY HAVE COME OUT ON
THE INITIAL UNHCR FLIGHTS. RODILL, HAVING LEFT
INVOLUNTARILY, IS NOT A REPRESENTATIVE CASE.

7. LATE ITEM: ASSELLA HAS JUST INFORMED US THAT
UNHCR REP DARRYL HAN WHO HAS GONE ON ALL SAIGON FLIGHTS
TO DATE HAS UNOFFICIAL INFO FROM PRG THAT JULY 4 FLIGHT
MAY BRING OUT FOUR AMERICANS CONNECTED WITH MENNONITE
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CENTRAL COMMITTEE. NAMES NOT AVAILABLE. UNHCR IS
NOT RPT NOT NOTIFYING MENNONITE CC REPS IN VIENTIANE
BECAUSE INFO IS STILL UNOFFICIAL. EXDIS CAPTION ADDED
IN LIGHT OF THIS PARAGRAPH.
CHAPMAN

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NNN

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TAGS: CASC, SREF, AEMR, VS, US, UNHCR, PRG, (RODILL, DAN)
To: STATE
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